

Pivotal people, pivotal journeys

INTERIM REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF A FUNDRAISING STUDY TOUR
ON CEOS AND THEIR ORGANISATIONS

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Finally, this report is dedicated to 13 outstanding individuals, the 12 CEOs who continue to lead and inspire within and beyond their organisations, and to Andrew Thomas, former GM – Philanthropy and Trustee Services at Perpetual for coming up with this experiment that will hopefully have some far reaching sector consequences.

The Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies (ACPNS)
is a specialist research and teaching unit within the
Queensland University of Technology Business School in Brisbane, Australia.

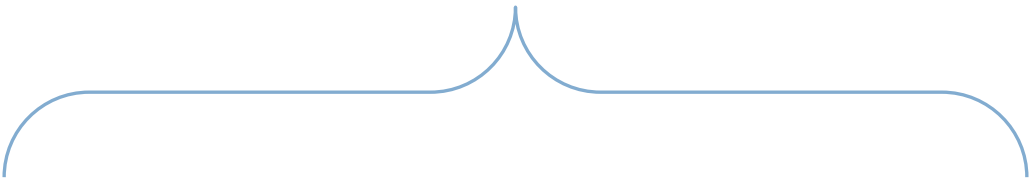
It seeks to promote the understanding of philanthropy and nonprofit issues by drawing upon academics from many disciplines and working closely with nonprofit practitioners, intermediaries and government departments. The mission of the Centre is “to bring to the community the benefits of teaching, research, technology and service relevant to the philanthropic and nonprofit communities”, with a theme of “For the common good”.

A list of the Centre’s publications is available from <http://www.bus.qut.edu.au/research/cpns/>
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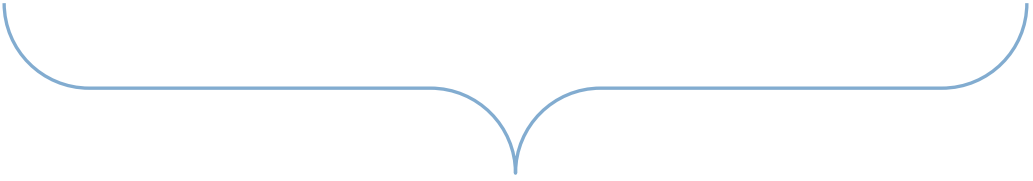
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It is an opportunity to take time out with peers who are experiencing similar challenges in a stimulating environment where I was exposed to learning I would not ordinarily seek out myself. I created strong and enduring bonds with those who travelled with me and got a much stronger understanding of the NFP space and how the CEO can play a key role in this.



1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Some substantive questions and a theory of change


The genesis of this project came from some big questions:

- How might Australian fundraising organisations be more successful?
- Is there a key point in these organisations where building capacity will impact most?
- What might happen if a study tour experiment were undertaken?
- How long might it be before subsequent organisational change is possible?
- What conditions promote or inhibit progress?
- What would this mean for the wider sector beyond the study tour participants?

Since 2007, the Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies at QUT has been investigating the first question in a range of ways with support from the Perpetual Foundation, the EF and SL Gluyas Trust and the Edward Corbould Charitable Trust. These studies were designed to assist the nonprofit sector through local information about the funding and fundraising landscape.

The 2013 study [*Who's Asking for What?*](#) provided a crystalline answer to the second question, spotlighting the role of nonprofit CEOs as the champions of fundraising particularly within organisations but also with the wider world. It found that a fundraising-savvy CEO paved the way for an organisation that understood the long-term nature of fundraising success, the imperative to invest, the importance of fundraising team retention, the board's strategic role in fundraising, and other such factors in successful outcomes. However, fundraising-savvy CEOs are far from universal and even those with some fundraising knowledge seldom have the opportunity to hone it. A gap exists in this market.

So a simple theory of change emerged: upskill CEOs and impact the wider organisation's fundraising capacity. Create ripples of organisational change by taking pivotal people on pivotal journeys.



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pivotal journeys.

1.2 Testing the theory

A two-year longitudinal study was created. Twelve CEOs of diverse fundraising organisations initially would nominate some goals for change and then undertake a week-long study tour in the USA. An ACPNS researcher with practical fundraising and CEO experience would facilitate the tour acting as a participant observer and subsequently monitoring organisations' progress towards their goals. An experienced grantmaker from the funding body would also form part of the group to feed in funder perspectives and proffer a further specialised information resource.

This study had four key purposes:

- To equip organisations to fast-track growth in their fundraising levels and increase their long-term fundraising potential
- To focus attention on the critical role of a fundraising-savvy CEO in organisational sustainability
- To influence board thinking and knowledge about resourcing fundraising and building an internal culture of philanthropy
- To work with these organisations in specified longitudinal research to generate research findings that will inform and assist the sector more broadly.

1.3 What this interim report covers

This working paper charts interim progress. It reports demographics of the study participants and their organisation types, and tracks their pre-tour expectations, the learning priorities, standout findings they gained from the tour and also one of the more unexpected results of this study: the emergence of a tightknit ongoing Community of Practice that continues to meet and exchange in ways unforeseen at the beginning of this experiment.

The study has a two-year time frame and so does not as yet reach final conclusions and recommendations. However, it is appropriate to highlight standout themes and messages to this point.

1.4 Some key takeaway messages to date

These messages might inform CEOs, fundraisers, policymakers but most particularly boards and funders. In the environment of giving in which this study is sited, there are some clear gifts that strategic boards, funders and individual CEOs can bestow to achieve demonstrable results.

1.4.1 The gift of time

Time and resource lacks were by far viewed as the key barriers in growing fundraising knowledge and programs. The time to be away from the CEO's desk and focusing fully on fundraising was also highlighted as a rarity but a vital enabling step in change.

I don't think you can ever underestimate the value of getting out of the business and being exposed to ideas away from your workplace...

It's time out of this frenetic rat race to look down on the business as a whole.

1.4.2 The gift of colleagues/'professional friends'

Participants highlighted the ongoing and unique value of the study tour group:

- As a sounding board to benchmark progress
- As a source of advice, networks and recommendations
- To provide insight into different approaches and ways to deal with particular circumstances
- To ask probing questions and encourage people to think their ideas through in more depth
- As a source of encouragement and moral support
- As a source of intelligence about wider nonprofit sector issues and opportunities

They commented that an individual attending a conference might get a transitory ‘shot in the arm’ from the experience but they felt their experience was multiplied, extended and reinforced by the group in ways that made them take real action from the learning experience. There was less chance of returning to work with good intent but being overtaken by urgent demands elsewhere in the organisation and having good ideas languish. The group kept fundraising change on the agenda. The holistic and immersive nature of the experience built trust and a genuine Community of Practice with ongoing value to the CEOs and their organisations. A bank of shared resources, strategies, networks and information has evolved and continues to grow.

...sharing those insights about what are the characteristics of the organisations that are successful in the space we’re doing things in.

The network that I now have at the end of the phone is invaluable.


I've got a list of 15 or 16 things that I'm going to go back and do and they've all come from something someone said and how I can transpose that into my organisation. So everyone, I have got a point from everyone in here. So I think that's exciting.

1.4.3 The gift of knowledge

Knowledge needs to be packaged right. CEOs in this study reported learning about fundraising mostly from others – peers, role models, fundraisers’ and that they very rarely find time to read articles on the topic. Half did not refer to research to inform fundraising practice in their organisations. Boards similarly were described as not accessing fundraising knowledge in a formal way. This study tour met the CEOs’ needs for peer learning. It worked.

The privilege of spending the time away with minds like we have around this teleconference...

Much of it relates to the networking opportunities that arose and the ability to better draw on the expertise of my peers. Prior to this I did not have access to a group that I had shared so much with.



Topics about funding rather than just fundraising emerged as important, such as innovation, commercialisation and social enterprise.

Priority topics. Pre-tour, the core knowledge deficits/opportunities were overall strategy, donor relationships and specific fundraising mechanisms, especially major gifts and bequests. Post-tour, most valued information areas that CEOs wanted to work more on in their organisations were donor relations and donor care, donor segmentation (e.g. middle donors, women donors) and greater individual understanding of why people are giving to them. Topics about funding rather than just fundraising emerged as important, such as innovation, commercialisation and social enterprise.

I think just being able to identify what the opportunities might be and what we need to do to make those a reality.

Brain overload. In hindsight, the hectic pace of the study tour and the dawn to dusk immersion as a group in hindsight left too little time for deeper individual reflection. Participants agreed a week was not long enough and some downtime in between would provide more thinking space given the span of information to absorb and process. A ten day group study tour rather than a week would work better, despite how difficult it is to capture organisational leaders for concentrated time periods.

1.4.4 The gift of the levers for change

Energy, focus, a mandate for change. Many participants reported being ‘energised’ by the study tour experience and to undergoing a mindshift about fundraising that led them to work quietly on a similar mindshift in their organisations immediately on their return.

...the benefit to the organisation will be my own renewed energy in tackling this very important issue for us.

Phased progress. Change was evident as an immediate, medium-term and longer term outcome. It was rarely linear and rarely straightforward but occurred with persistent effort and often individual group member or whole of group advice.

Internal support. Ultimately, improving fundraising in the organisation came down to the leadership of the board and having staff aligned with the strategic vision of the organisation.

Not just fundraising per se. Communication, marketing and rebranding activities were highlighted as important areas to improve concurrently with fundraising change due to their overlap with fundraising.

1.4.5 Finally, some key success factors

Participants identified five main success factors for such group learning initiatives about fundraising:

- Getting away from the day-to-day business of running the organisation
- Informal, social time to debrief and get to know others
- Diversity of organisations whereby no one was in direct competition to others
- Commitment, openness and willingness of individuals to participate
- Group facilitation

There is no doubt that the CEO is a pivot point for fundraising success and likewise that for these organisations the study tour in turn has been a pivotal journey. The final report to be compiled in the first half of 2016 will document just how pivotal the two-year journey has been for the CEOs and organisations and will deliver further learning for the wider sector. Academic articles that add this data to the world body of knowledge on fundraising and leadership will also flow from this study.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In 2012/13, ACPNS explored the role played by CEOs and board members in supporting and advancing fundraising and development within their nonprofit organisation¹. This research (available for free download at <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/59196/>) confirmed that the CEO is overwhelmingly seen as their organisation's fundraising champion and the CEO and board members having fundraising knowledge provided crucial strategic direction and oversight to successful fundraising programs. From this initial study, a new question emerged – How might a change in the CEO's fundraising knowledge improve fundraising activity and outcomes for their organisation?

To answer this question, a longitudinal qualitative study was launched with the CEOs of 12 fundraising organisations across Australia. The CEOs along with the inaugural Australian Grantmaker of the Year, Caitriona Fay from Perpetual and lead researcher Dr Wendy Scaife travelled to San Antonio, Texas, USA to attend the annual, larger scale Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) conference in March 2014.

The study has four key purposes:

- To equip organisations to fast-track growth in their fundraising levels and increase their long-term fundraising potential
- To focus attention on the critical role of a fundraising-savvy CEO in organisational sustainability
- To influence board thinking and knowledge about resourcing fundraising and building an internal culture of philanthropy
- To work with these organisations in specified longitudinal research to generate research findings that will inform and assist the sector more broadly.

This research used a primarily qualitative research design with participant observation, interviews, focus groups and participant reflections forming the bulk of the data.

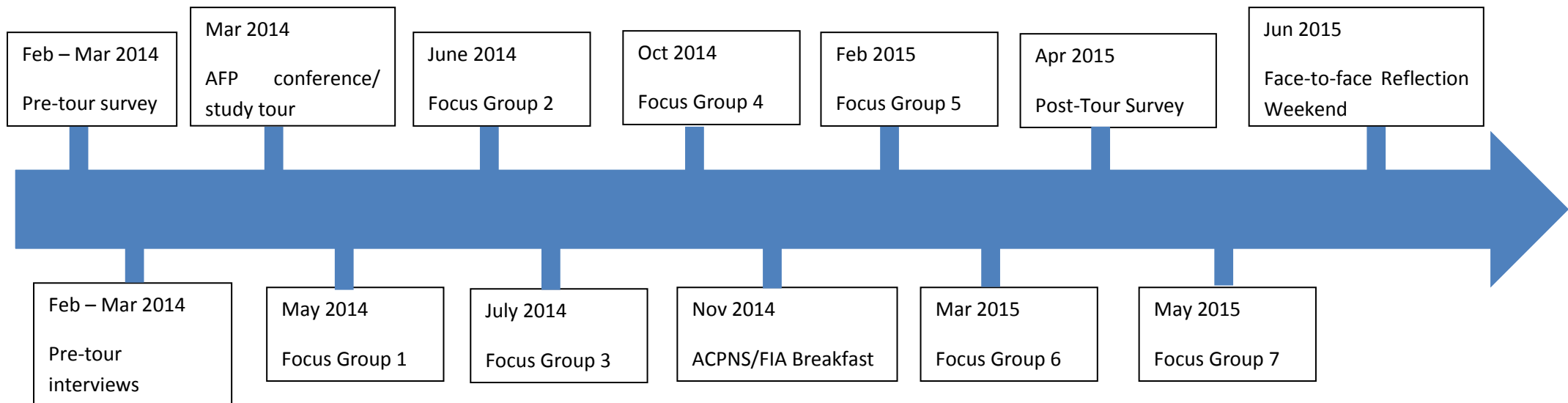
Three main data collection phases occurred:

- Pre-tour (interviews and survey)
- During tour (focus group at beginning, daily diary entries during tour)
- Post-tour (focus groups, personality survey, open survey, reflection weekend)

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¹ This research forms part of a series on nonprofit capacity building supported by the Perpetual Foundation, the EF and SL Gluyas Trust and the Edward Corbould Charitable Trust under the management of Perpetual Trustee Company Ltd. Other research in this series spans various aspects of considered versus spontaneous giving (bequests, major gifts and foundations) and can be freely downloaded from <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/28202/>, <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/27259/>, <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/40336/>, <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/48801/>

3.0 PROJECT TIMELINE



4.0 THE ORGANISATIONS

The organisations that took part in this study were chosen to provide a variety of sizes, geographic location and cause areas. In this way no organisation was in direct competition with another for donors.

Similarly, the CEOs were also diverse in terms of their tenure at the organisation as CEO, and their personal fundraising and other expertise.

To compile the sample for this study, ACPNS set a frame of: CEOs of organisations with some full-time fundraising focus, from different sizes, fundraising experience levels, cause areas and parts of Australia, both male and female, with board support to undertake the study and the potential to grow their organisational capacity through this experience.

4.1 Size of organisations

- Seven of the organisations had less than four FTE fundraising/development staff. Three had between 12 and 14 staff while the remaining two organisations had more than 40 FTE fundraising/development staff.
- Only one organisation had run a fundraising function for less than a year. The **majority** of the organisations have had **a fundraising function between nine and 17 years** and **three of the organisations have had this function for more than 28 years**.
- **Half** of the organisations had a **total revenue** in their most recent reported financial year of **less than \$4 million**. Two organisations had an annual organisational revenue between \$4 and \$10 million. The two largest organisations had an annual organisational revenue around \$75 million.
- **Fundraising contributed** to less than 15% of total revenue for three of the organisations, and **between 30% and 60% for six of the organisations**. **For three organisations**, fundraising contributed **more than 70%** of the total revenue for the organisation (two of these were above 95%).

As can be seen from Figure 2, the organisations have **diverse revenue sources**. **Six organisations** gained **more than 30% of their revenue from government grants or corporate sponsorships**. Individual donations played a large role in two organisations. Bequests and trusts only provided more than 30% of the total revenue in one organisation. Similarly, events were only a major source of income for one organisation.

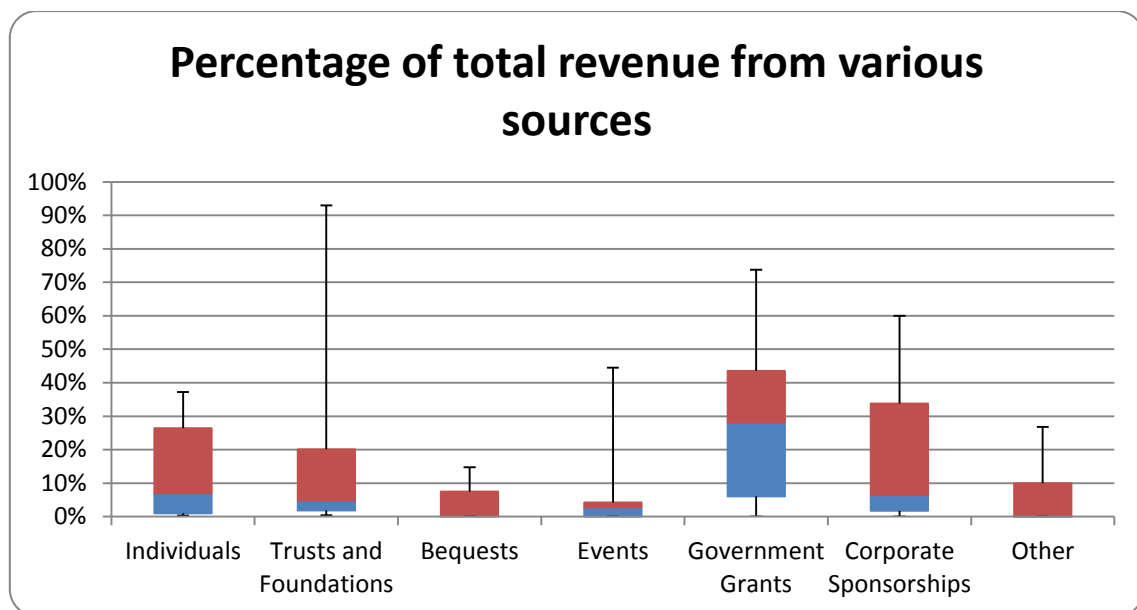


Figure 1. Box and whisker plots² showing percentage of total revenue from various sources.

4.2 Experience of the CEOs

Three CEOs chosen to participate in the study had been in the role up to one year and **six CEOs between one and five years**. The remaining three had been CEO for more than five years (two of which had been in the role for more than a decade). In terms of fundraising expertise, participants rated their personal and organisation's fundraising expertise on a five point scale (where one represents low and five, high). **The mean personal fundraising expertise was 3.17 (SD = 1.19) while the mean organisation's fundraising expertise was 3.08 (SD = 1.00)**. This suggests that **while the participants did not believe they had scant fundraising knowledge, they did believe that they still had a lot to learn**. While the means were quite similar, **the mode (or most frequent response) was 2 for personal expertise and 4 for the organisation's expertise**.

4.3 Where they gain their fundraising information

Most participants have undergone some form of course or formal training. This may be general seminars regarding fundraising or a conference.

I also did do a grant making workshop through Philanthropy Australia about three years ago.

² The plots represent the minimum, 25th percentile, median, 75th percentile and maximum to indicate the distribution of revenue sources across the twelve organisations.

For some of the participants, courses related but not specific to fundraising had been undertaken. **Half the participants mentioned** that **articles** are important in building their fundraising knowledge but noted the **major time barrier to this approach** for knowledge.

Then my other source of information is from various journals and reading materials - that is the bit that gets challenged when you get busier and busier and you don't have the time to actually read in-depth and explore something. It's more widely than your immediate circle.

We've got this great little library that we're developing in [organisation]. As each of the program managers finds things, shares it across the team, we save it there, and then the next thing is actually creating the time to use it.

Other sources of knowledge included **other charities, networking, peers (both within and outside the organisation), email lists, practitioners or professionals, the board and day-to-day experiences.**

Other charities probably would be my best source really - looking at what they're doing, going to some of their functions, things like that.

In terms of using research findings to guide fundraising, **nearly half of the participants revealed they do not use research to guide their practice.**

Probably not formally but if it comes across [my desk]. I - like just pep talks, things like that I read but I haven't really formally gone into looking at that. But I definitely need to I think.

I haven't really, no, but I would be interested in doing that. Even being involved with this study tour thing will open some of that to me - just get me thinking about other things.

One organisation uses internal data analyses on their programs along with examining research. Specifically, **the JBWere report, the Pareto report, the London Benchmarking Group, Fundraising Institute Australia, Pro Bono, and the Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies** were mentioned as places that provide the research used by the organisations.

The **areas identified as the most useful involved others.** This input may be from **role models or simply talking to experts, peers and other people within the organisation.** **Email lists** were also mentioned as being quite useful.

Working with people who have been fundraisers – they're the people I've learnt the most from... Practical examples...have been the best thing.

Nearly all of the participants stated that **the board had not accessed particular information about fundraising** in any organised, ongoing way. Only two organisations said that this had occurred; one


was CEO-initiated while the other was a large data collection procedure to understand brand awareness of the organisation.

4.4 Barriers to accessing knowledge and growing the fundraising program

Time and resources were by far the most common barriers to growing fundraising reported. As one participant noted

I think one of the challenges for us is time and it's both time for the board to dedicate and actually engage, and time for myself and the senior team. We're at the start of a fundraising journey and to get resources shifted we're then tying into the business plan, research, evaluation and then time to pick the right tools and technology. It will all actually be more efficient time-wise in the long run but you actually have to invest a lot of staff training, so whether or not it's your own time or purchasing someone else's time, that time element I think is critical and one of the positives of being away for a week [for the study tour] is that you're actually in a couple of time zones - you've got lots of scope to do a bit of that thinking.

Probably having the time to think about some ideas and then looking at how to go about implementing them, and then testing them out really. We've been so busy doing programs - and we do try to raise 10% every year to put away into our surpluses but we probably haven't given it enough thought. It's been a time thing.



Time and resources were by far the most common barriers to growing fundraising...

Three organisations mentioned that the cause itself was a barrier to growing their program. It is “harder to sell than programs for kids or medical research”.

Part of it is the cause - the (cause area – medical condition) is not a particularly sexy one so we need to be very clever in the way we build our case for support. Despite the fact it's not very sexy it affects lots of people so when we do put out appeal type asks, we get very good responses, probably better than other not-for-profits do. So I think the cause is a big barrier.

Finding supporters and **the current market** were also mentioned by more than one organisation. There were several areas raised that were unique to the organisation. These included **an aging membership, the culture of the organisation, brand awareness, lack of knowledge and the organisation being too strong in one area of fundraising at the expense of other areas.**

5.0 FINDINGS

5.1 Pre Study Tour Goals and Expectations

5.1.1 Fundraising Change Goals

Participating organisations identified a number of fundraising change goals prior to joining the study tour. They were **generally around overall strategy, donor relationships and specific fundraising mechanisms.**

In terms of **overall strategy**, the hot issues were **diversification, building a case for support, internal cohesion around fundraisers, alignment of fundraising with programmatic activities, setting specific targets and public education.**

In terms of **donor relationships**, goals were around **deepening relationships** as well as **changing the nature of relationships**, for example converting regular donors to major gift donors.

In terms of specific **fundraising mechanisms**, **bequests** and **major gifts** were a priority for many organisations followed by corporate sponsorships, events and membership.

5.1.2 Expectations

Not surprisingly, participants' hopes and expectations for the study tour were closely related to their professional goals. When asked to identify their key, hoped-for study tour take away, they responded variously in no particular priority:

- **Innovative** fundraising methodologies
- **Benchmarks** for best practice in fundraising
- Knowledge on **corporate** sponsorships / corporate social responsibility
- **Social media** technology and policies
- Fundraising **basics**
- CRM **software**
- **Sector-specific** information
- **Change management** tools
- How to **turn members into donors**
- How to **engage the whole organisation, including the board** in fundraising

5.1.3 Anticipated benefits

Participants anticipated benefits were primarily around

- Gaining content knowledge
- Getting away from the day-to-day running of the organisation to focus on fundraising
- Being a part of a group and being able to bounce around ideas with them
- Learning from others' experiences
- Organisational change

Anticipated benefits from undertaking a study tour included:

- Gaining **new perspectives** and ideas from the American context
- Peer interaction, ongoing **networking**, reflection and bouncing off ideas **as part of a group**
- **Content knowledge** from the conference itself
- Time away to **reflect** and gain a **renewed energy**
- Affirmation, assurance and validation
- Developing **practical ways** to implement ideas and strategies
- Developing a **culture of fundraising**

Obviously, the content knowledge at the conference itself was highlighted as an anticipated benefit; in particular, being able to draw on **the expertise of international thought leaders** in fundraising.

Well the first thing actually will be the conference itself. I've never been to a fundraising conference of this size... Looking at some of the speakers, that's going to be great. Looking forward to seeing how the other organisations in America operate. I think there are some things that we can learn, and they can learn from us. Also the opportunity to meet with another 10 or 11 not-for-profit CEOs would be great. ... I have no interaction with my peers at all.

I'm always interested in academia and research and why and how the difference is made. So the purpose for me is to get a rich understanding of the stepping stones that an organisation can take in this. Where I see us as embryonic putting our hand out with donation boxes and give now programs, to actually developing a true policy that takes us through a process to develop into an organisation that is one that is sought after. So I want to know how to lead that and that's my personal driver to be there. The how to, and who to go to, and colleagues and the richness of sharing stories as well.

Well I'm looking forward to obviously the structured learning of the conference. Looking forward to the conversations with colleagues - I think it's always great to hear from others what they're doing. My experience is that the sector is pretty generous in that regard.... I think that it will be great to learn from others what they're doing and to get a sense from what they're doing where we sit in that, and to share learning. So I think that will be great... I think generally it will be interesting to see what's to be learnt in the US context because it is a different context. They clearly are very leading edge in a lot of what they do in fundraising, so not all of it will be able to be translated, but certainly I think will be food for thought.

I think I'll have a greater appreciation of some of the challenges that are facing [the Fundraising] team. I'll be interested to see how the communication with my board shifts and changes as a result of the study tour.

It's going to educate me, more immediately, and arm me, I hope, with current thinkings and practices, and enable me to challenge the underpinnings of our strategy to shift it to where - and reposition our whole strategy with a fundraising component in it that takes us to another level. That's basically what I'm after.

Getting away from the day-to-day operations of the organisation was highlighted strongly by several participants as an anticipated benefit.

I don't think you can ever underestimate the value of getting out of the business and being exposed to ideas away from your workplace and the usual demands on your time, because it allows you to actually turn it over in your mind different ways. You've got a bit more freedom to really reflect and see how it could be applied, and the time to actually think how would I structure this? How can I share this concept with those that may take a bit more to get on board? It allows you to organise and prioritise your thoughts once you've actually been exposed to different ideas and thought about it from generally a more relaxed frame of mind.

It's time out of this frenetic rat race to look down on the business as a whole. Because we had the strategic planning session last week, it's so timely for me to take on board feedback. The ideas that we've been thinking about, there has to be a fair bit of reorganisation and soul searching about, well what's the purpose of the organisation? What are we actually doing? So for me it's been sort of taking myself out of an Australian context and the local context, but still being around people that are in the same space in some ways. So you can bounce ideas but it doesn't get down to operational because people don't know your business inside out, so you can actually do it quite strategically and high level.

A couple of things. I think one will be just getting out of the day-to-day environment, going to a different country, new ideas, new people - all those external factors - and just being there in the room with all of that going on, and

being exposed to thought leadership from all over the world. The other aspect I'm really looking forward to, and I think I'll get a lot from, is just being part of the cohort - just being there with the others and actually having a focused purpose for being there and having tasks along the way. I think it will draw out a practical way to implement some of these learnings, and that I think will be fantastic. Just being able to have that extended network of people back in Australia that I can talk to when I get back. I think that will be a really big benefit.

I haven't done an awful lot of professional development in [fundraising] ... I see it as a good opportunity for me to go away and come back a bit refreshed - not that I'm haggard, but it's a good break. I think there'll be some good learnings I can pass on to my team. The thing that I like about this study tour is that you've actually got a component where the board are engaged. But I can give you no promises there about how engaged they're going to be.

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Time away offers a **valued chance for reflection**.

I think the chance to reflect and to talk about what we are seeing. I often test ideas by talking about them, so that aspect where we can get together over dinner or a drink at the end of the day and find out who's heard what and toss around ideas. I think that kind of thing, and then hopefully a bit of a network that comes out of that - people that you can email and catch up with and chat to on an ongoing basis over time. That's often as valuable as the actual information that you get.

Being part of the group and being able to bounce ideas off peers, was also a key desired outcome for most participants.

A lot of it was having people around you that you could bounce the ideas around with. Those where I've just gone off on my own, yes they're good reflection times but it's always better if there's at least one other that you can verbalise it out loud and you can test ideas, and just by talking about other peoples' thoughts and approaches it also colours and modifies your own. So a study tour of one is not as useful as a study tour of two plus more.

Because we're so small we don't have the opportunity to do something like this very much, if at all, so just the exposure - just getting to know other people on the tour. Just being able to have access to other ideas and even hearing other ideas and just getting outside of day-to-day same business. Sometimes you need to get

outside of that. Then when I come back I'll be just in a different headspace and ready to tackle things. So I think the benefit to the organisation will be my own renewed energy in tackling this very important issue for us.

I'm really looking forward to meeting different people, both the ones that I'm going with but also others over there to try to identify some of the people that might be interested in having a continued relationship.

I think the peer networking with the others who are going - understanding their activities, their work, their learnings from the day. As we all are exposed to new ideas through the AFP - being able to talk about what that might mean for us. Sharing that learning rather than being internal learning.

One is the networking with the colleagues on the tour...and learning and seeing what they're doing... don't know any of them. They're from a diverse range of organisations - that's going to be terrific. But also, obviously, American fundraising experience and what they're bringing to the table in that North American environment, which I know drives a lot of the development of fundraising worldwide in similar societies.

I think the best benefit is going to be out of the networking opportunities - I suspect might come out of the informal networking opportunities at the event.

Probably the network of the people we're going with - just being able to maybe pick up the phone at the end of the tour and chat to anyone. So that would be the Australian side of it. Then just the ideas really and what I'm going to be exposed to really, I think. Widening my knowledge on fundraising and just the ability to leverage different ideas and try them out really.... Hopefully we can get some ideas and trial those ideas, and then post me leaving leave that legacy of a whole fundraising arm really I think. It's only probably nine years old this foundation and it's really grown, but it does need a whole fundraising arm, but it needs good governance around that and sustainability. So hopefully we can look at some really good models of what other people have done over there and learnt the lessons. I mean we'll always make bad decisions I suppose, or pitfalls, but at least you can learn from other peoples' ways.

Learning from the experiences of others, both at the conference and the group, was seen as a potentially valuable opportunity to **compare and benchmark organisations**, maybe even offer some **validation of successes**.

...Also affirmation, assurance, maybe some new things as well for our board. So to be sharing those insights about what are the characteristics of the organisations that are successful in the space we're doing things in. I think it would be really useful to understand and transfer that understanding here, just to help with that education process, because we've been, as you know, educating and re-

engineering the organisation and we've got some pretty lofty goals for the next few years.

Obviously more knowledge, new ideas or sometimes just validation that the way we're doing things is actually good. Often you go to a conference and you come away thinking well, I didn't necessarily learn anything earth shattering but I know that what we're doing is as good as what everyone else is doing. So that can be comforting as well.

Ultimately, the hope of many participants, and indeed the purpose of the study tour is that these learnings would translate into **organisational change**.

I believe that if I can come back and work with the board and work with my GM Innovation that will potentially change the way we're seen from a philanthropist point of view.

I think just being able to identify what the opportunities might be and what we need to do to make those a reality.

We're an organisation that relies heavily on fundraising and I have a strong interest and some experience in the space, but I think by growing my understanding and experience and then sharing that, both with the board and with the broader organisation, that hopefully that will improve our capability in the area and translate into helping [our beneficiaries].

I also think we operate at our end of things in a sort of scarcity culture and it's quite good to force yourself in a way to enter a more collegiate space where you're sharing rather than in competition for your own survival. I think for a decade and a half in our end of the world there's been a lot of undercutting of the real costs of delivering in the end what are vital projects to a difficult part of the community - that's been a cost saving thing at a government level and that's made it difficult. It's quite good to come to a conference or a study tour and force yourself to share what you know and work against the kind of scarcity culture.

5.1.4 Participant's prior experience

To any group process, individuals bring a **range of personal and professional experience and expertise**.

In this case, participants had gained a lot of their fundraising experience through some formal training and short courses in specific aspects of fundraising, the occasional conference, nonprofit fundraising email lists and benchmarking reports, but mostly informal learning, through peers, knowledgeable fundraisers and even the board.

Then my other source of information is from various journals and reading materials - that is the bit that gets challenged when you get busier and busier and

you don't have the time to actually read in-depth and explore something. It's more widely than your immediate circle.

Okay, a lot of it's through working with peers, so it's informal learning - different approaches and unique activities or initiatives that people have undertaken. I don't think I've ever formally undertaken any fundraising training.

Working with people who have been fundraisers - they're the people I've learnt the most from I think. Practical examples of how to do stuff has been the best thing.

I've got a number of contacts/mentors.

Probably the majority of what I've learnt has been directly from my chairman. Just because the nature of how we fundraise as an organisation, we tend to work with a few high net worth philanthropists and a couple of select foundations. It's more of a one-on-one approach. Everything I've kind of learned really has been mostly because of [the Chairman] - just going to meetings with him.

Prior to undertaking the study tour, participants reflected on what **individual knowledge, expertise** and **personal contributions** they would bring to the group and the study:

- Knowledge on corporate support
- Humour
- Sponsorships
- Aboriginal relations
- Social enterprise
- Technology / CRM / Websites
- Direct response background
- Food expertise
- Ability to draw connections and join dots
- Rural Australia
- Varied background
- Great board
- Major gifts
- Advocacy / Government Relations.

All seemed **open and willing to share the experience they have and to learn** from each other.

As the leader of relatively large organisation with a strong fundraising track record to draw on, I am keen to share some of that experience with my fellow study tour participants. That said however, I am also very aware that as a large, long established organization [name of organisation] could learn much from smaller, younger organisations that may be more innovative and flexible in their strategic responses. I am therefore looking forward to the shared learnings that might flow from the tour.

Some 5 of the 12 had participated in a study tour previously but in different fields.

5.2 Study Tour

5.2.1 Experience

In terms of the actual study tour, participants attended the **AFP Conference** and undertook **four site visits** to other nonprofit organisations. Quite a number of participants added on other **personally tailored components** to the trip whilst they were in the US in order to maximise their learning opportunities in areas **specific to their cause**.

At the conference, participants attended a **variety of different sessions**, according to their own interests and learning needs and to enable good topic coverage across the group.

The knowledge gained from this learning experience has been roughly grouped together according to key information areas that stood out for participants: **donor stewardship and engagement; technology (including databases and Web 2.0/social media); organisational elements and specific fundraising mechanisms. Intermediaries** were also raised by some participants as a learning area. (These categories are not mutually exclusive with databases an essential tool for donor stewardship in order to facilitate major gifts for example).

5.2.1.1 *Brief summary of the content knowledge gained from the study tour*

The primary areas of content knowledge gained from the tour were around:

- Donor stewardship
- Technology
- Organisational elements
- Specific fundraising mechanisms
- Intermediaries

The following are the top of mind learning areas and points for participants while undertaking the study tour.

Donor stewardship

Participants noted the following as key topics:

- Knowing your donors (background, history and connection to the organisation)
- Personalised touch (tailor made proposals and personalised thank yous)
- Middle level donors
- Gen Y
- Women donors
- Top 20 major gift group
- Relationships

- Trust and authenticity
- “Moves” management

It is essential to know as much as possible about your prospect before meeting them and in particular the link between the organization and them. Emotional ties are the most powerful.

Critical to have clarity of potential donor details to enable [the] “ask”

Significant stewardship of donors in USA may be considered irritating to Australian donors

Do more background research on potential donors ... What areas have they funded in the past?

Spend the time cultivating potential donors – “don’t ask someone to marry you on the first date”

Middle level donors know who your executive director is however they fall between the cracks as they are not considered major donors (over \$10,000) and not really considered standard direct mail donors.

Ask a donor to tell you the best thank you [they] have every received.

I learned about the collective women’s group – and the way in which donor and giving circles might work – fascinating process – will it work for us?

Gen Y next generation have different “giving” motivations. Not “natural” givers. Create a specialised approach.

Women are an increasing component in overall charitable giving both through direct donors and as a real influencer in donation decisions. However, women as donors are very different to men and must be cultivated in a “socialised” collaborative context on their terms. Donations from women take more time.

Get to know your supporters/donors and create a data base; Age, demographic, gender

The importance of building relationships with donors and prospective donors.

The importance of telling the story.

The importance of midlevel donors \$1K to \$10K For example 1% of donors give over \$1K but they represent 34% of total funds received.

Idea of a “synthetic family” i.e. a community of giving. That sense of belonging can drive support. Interesting correlation between childlessness and bequests. Giving is “social”.

You don’t choose donors, they choose you.

“Fundraising is about relationship” so there is a need to [be] authentic.

Technology

The following areas were of most interest to participants as new learning areas:

- Social media platforms and policies
- Database / data management
- Crowdsourcing
- Web demographics
- Peak times
- Attributing income
- How many clicks to donate
- Apps

Email is still the most powerful social media tool, followed by Facebook and Twitter.

Twitter – is it about listening or reaching or both?

Pop-ups on organizational websites are very powerful to attract giving and can be linked to major campaigns rather than constant.

Use of technology is essential in managing donors.

Peak time for online donations at a desktop PC is between 8am and 11am and peak time for online donation (via Mobile/tablets) is 8pm to 11pm.

There are lots of new online social platforms that can make your social online work easier.

Great day of learning on social media... learnt lots about the various tactics people are using and the limitations within them.

Facebook alone will not provide a great fundraising tool unless people want to share the content – we need to be creating content people want to share.

The use of technology; as a means to increase our donor base to engage, and activate change and create donor loyalty.

Organisational elements

Areas exciting most discussion were:

- Engaging the Board
- Establishing fundraising targets, plans and policies
- Cost benefit analysis
- Organisational culture

- Development Committees
- Fundraising team roles and responsibilities
- Fundraising staff turnover
- Media, communications, impact, story-telling

Board behaviour and skills set discussions are essential for good performance in fundraising.

Absolutely critical to have the CEO involved in fundraising for high wealth individuals.

A major gift takes 18 - 24 months to achieve but staff turnover in most NFPs is 16 months.

Set aside five hours a week every week (in a block or one hour a day) for major gift work.

The need for Vision, Optimism, Ambition, Cooperation, Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Investment, Information- benchmark your fundraising.

Take risks...courage

Use of Development Committees (or board subcommittee) to focus on fundraising.

Specific fundraising mechanisms

Core interest was in:

- Major Gifts
- Bequests
- Events
- Sponsorship
- The Ask (script, responses, and rehearsal)
- Giving circles
- Corporate social responsibility

Know how to respond to the answer of the ask (yes, no, maybe) ... Have the script in your head.

'The purpose of direct mail is to secure gifts from a broad base and to build a pipeline for major gifts and bequests' is a very simple – but effective summary.

Soliciting major gifts session was fascinating. The US uses a very systematic approach to MG asks, with a lot of structure around the process...

Find your phrase – the MG session talked about finding your asking phrase so you don't get stuck when doing the ask. I don't have an asking phrase – but quite liked the one she provided 'we've talked about your interest in X because of Y, I am therefore asking you to consider a gift of Z for the project'.

Relatively small contribution of corporate giving in the US (3% out of total of \$360 bil pa). Individual giving is the largest proportion of donated funds. The “tripod” of giving i.e. annual giving, major gifts and bequests.

The “reputation economy” is an important element in the corporate fundraising environment.

Don't be afraid to ask for money!

Intermediaries

- Financial advisors

[There's] opportunity for utilizing financial networks to increase reach to individuals who are planning for wealth, taxation or estate management.

5.2.2 Reflections

Immediate reflections from the tour were around:

- Intensive data uptake
- Need for a different overall approach
- The desire for ongoing collaboration
- Specific areas of focus

In addition to daily reflections during the study tour, participants were asked for their overriding impressions after returning from the study tour:

These varied from a sense of **good but intensive data uptake...**

- *packed brains*
- *rich and intense in terms of content*
- *information overload*
- *very intense (brain overload)*

- *I understand this game much, much better.*

to the need for a **different overall approach** because of the study tour ...

- *taking the time to come up with plans, actually having that time*
- *strategy and planning*
- *big, bold vision*
- *tips and simple plans to do things well*

and a sense of the **ongoing value of the group...**

- *collaboration*
- *networking*

as well as **specific areas of focus...**

- *donor relations*
- *women as donors*
- *donor care*
- *donor segmentation*
- *why people give*

The hardest thing as a CEO is to lead and manage and create time and space to think without the encumbrance of work and people!! A leader must ensure this time and space is created to keep fresh. And gain insights and ideas from other practitioners who are not in your business. The study tour did this for me.

An invaluable experience for me personally and the organisation...

It is an opportunity to take time out with peers who are experiencing similar challenges in a stimulating environment where I was exposed to learning I would not ordinarily seek out myself. I created strong and enduring bonds with those who travelled with me and got a much stronger understanding of the NFP space and how the CEO can play a key role in this.

5.2.3 Conceptualisation

For some, the study tour and group proved quite **serendipitous timing-wise**, aligning with some synergistic thinking in the organisation.

I've had a really good chat with [staff member] who's my development director here. I sent her an email actually while I was away with my initial thoughts about the conference and what I thought we might do coming out of it. And she replied with a really great email. She had some similar thoughts and there was a lot of affinity between our two sets of ideas so that was really encouraging and we're in the process of working up the fundraising plan that will go to the board in June with the budget for next financial year.

I was very taken with the whole notion of middle donors.

I will say it was good to come back, and I was very taken with the whole notion of middle donors. Some of those sessions that I went to about the donors between \$1,000 and \$10,000 and one of my staff unbeknownst to me had already put together a whole lot of work in that area, he had a whole lot of upgrade programs and some engagement pieces that they were coming, that they were hoping they could present to me so [it] was like [a] good meeting of minds.

...it was almost the perfect storm of having the time away with this group and then some time to share what I'd learned with this group with my team, and to talk to them around the things that had really been relevant for me in San Antonio. A lot of that was around social media and digital aspects of fundraising and looking at innovation there as well as the major donor space.

Some participants reported a **shift in their mind set and that of their colleagues** after the study tour as they began to **reconceptualise what was possible** from a fundraising perspective.

I think for me, generally what's been very beneficial is just the renewed sense of enthusiasm and input like other people have said. But it's even more than that. I've actually had a shift in my mindset about fundraising and what's possible. I really do feel that there are many more possibilities in my mind than what I had before I went to the US and yeah, for whatever reason, I'm just starting to think differently about how we can raise money and I'm a lot more optimistic, not that I was pessimistic before but there are a lot more opportunities to do this.

5.2.4 Experimentation

After the study tour, participants began to implement what they had learnt and experiment with **new ideas and approaches**.

Following the study tour I was able to encourage all the staff to come on the journey. We only have a small team in fundraising but the entire staff have become involved.

I came back with a board meeting only two weeks after I landed so it was good to be able to take some of the stuff that I'd learnt at the event at the conference and put it into practice almost straightaway.

Several participants described the experience as **energising and a catalyst for organisational change**.

So the whole trip overseas sort of timed itself perfectly for me. Since I've returned, I've gone head on straight into the board with energizing the strategic discussions we have scheduled ... of which fundraising is a part and then very specifically, determining some fundraising goals and strategies within the overall strategy which the board can sign off on.

I've injected most of the learnings I got personally over there sometimes as a check to see that we are doing it and it's pleasing to see that we are doing some things. It was also disappointing to see that we are not doing anything in some areas so that's the whole reason for it. In a way for me it's been a major catalyzer, whether we are successful or not will be a moot point.

In some cases, the study tour prompted **specific decisions and actions** as a result of the learnings.

We made a decision ...when I came back from San Antonio to shift our middle donors into the remit of our major gift people so they could look at how we can transition them from a middle donor to a major giver.

My personal goal is to spend a minimum of five hours a week on direct fundraising activities – got that from one of the sessions.

I'm right in [the middle of] ... a pretty close engagement with the board on strategy, and since I came back a range of things have occurred to progress that - shift and changes required to take ownership of fundraising at the board level ... [I have] done a couple of papers on it, one of which was heavily influenced by my American experience, which went down pretty well actually.

I shifted some budget resources to get a better emphasis on what we're doing with women with our fundraising. We don't have any specific strategies regarding engagement with women - it's a more generalised approach - and that was one of my big take outs from the States. So we're going to ...do some more work on that.

We've got a board meeting next week and it's actually my first board meeting since coming back from the study tour, so I will be reporting to the board about

the study tour and actions that we're adopting operationally, but also putting forward a new strategy, which incorporates a lot of the learnings around fundraising ...

As a result of the time in San Antonio we've sort of put together a series of strategies that are playing out short term and long term.

The San Antonio stuff - it's certainly stimulated the thinking and said, okay, well - it's made us say let's experiment with these things.

5.3 Community of Practice

The group was valuable:

- As a sounding board to benchmark progress
- As a source of advice, networks and recommendations
- To provide insight into different approaches and ways to deal with particular circumstances
- To ask probing questions and encourage people to think their ideas through in more depth
- As a source of encouragement and moral support
- As a source of intelligence about wider nonprofit sector issues and opportunities

In addition to the study tour, participants saw the value in staying connected with the group of participating peers, forming somewhat of a Community of Practice. Hence, in the months following the study tour, participants initiated a regular teleconference process (unplanned originally) where they could **continue to reflect with the group** on what they had learnt and conceptualise how they can keep implementing the learning.

I'd like to keep the contact going with the group because I think it keeps people and me intellectually honest.

This is our commitment to checking in with our peers who can help re-motivate or support that change...

The privilege of spending the time away with minds like we have around this teleconference...

Much of it relates to the networking opportunities that arose and the ability to better draw on the expertise of my peers. Prior to this I did not have access to a group that I had shared so much with.

The whole experience allowed me to interact with other CEOs from not-for-profits, which for my personal growth was so advantageous.

...the ability to call and talk to others when I can benefit from their expertise, and to offer my organisational expertise to others when they need it

Collegiate thinking - encouraging our organisation to be less cynical. New ways of thinking...

Increased technical knowledge and creation of a peer cohort...

Development of a safe network to challenge my own thinking; problem solve and develop strategies; share research and outcomes...

The network that I now have at the end of the phone is invaluable. The ideas generated within the group give me inspiration. The openness of communication within the group, the knowledge of [facilitator] and her experience.

Collaboration. Gaining insights from experienced people, learning about issues and how others have solved them.

Learning from my peers (both in fundraising and other CEO roles). Understanding I am not the only one experiencing certain aspects of life in the NFP world!

Networking for CEOs is important as it's the lead role. There is little support in fundraising unless of course the Board is across this work. A safe network of trust is particularly beneficial.

Perhaps the peer group will prove the longest standing benefit over time.

[The group] opens thinking and provides an ongoing support network to bounce ideas off during an implementation phase.

I have increased knowledge, broadened networks and established a peer group.

CEOs in fundraising get limited opportunities to mix creatively with their peers and other professionals with real experience.

*Understanding I am
not the only one
experiencing certain
aspects of life in the
NFP world!*

The group interacted via teleconference every four-eight weeks, with individual side meetings and subgroups as needed. They shared files, tools, ideas and contacts using technology such as Dropbox, Linked-In Groups and doodle polls.

I'll be really happy to share the outcomes of this when we get together.

One of our team is currently doing some work exploring the various workplace giving platforms and who is on what, so I am happy to share that when we polish it up.

If there's anything I can do in [state] let me know, especially if it's introducing you to any corporates over here.

If you'd be happy to do an intro for me, that would be great.

There's a really great blog if you guys don't have that.

The group was used as a **sounding board to compare progress, benchmark organisations and assess the current state of affairs within the sector.**

We are also looking at bringing in board members with that focus...so it's interesting that you're doing the same.

I was just wondering from the rest of the group has anyone else done it because I tried to get it over the line but couldn't get it past my President, but I'm going to keep going.

I confirmed the metrics are very similar to what we do, so that was a useful checking exercise for me. It's helped me to - I'd never asked the questions. I'd never really interacted with anyone to find out what they were doing. I'd never done it before, so it was very helpful in that regard.

We're starting to see direct response really plateau and I'm interested to know whether others are seeing that, and that's sector wide or whether it's something that's unique...

Participants used the group when **seeking advice and recommendations on particular topics, or a potential course of action.**

It would be good to have some advice from someone who has experience in that kind of direct marketing area... if you have any tips on where to find that sort of resource.

I might have a chat with you offline ... about how you had that conversation with your board ... because I want to have a similar conversation with my board.

I'd be really interested in how people help get ideas socialised so that when you do go to the board there is a different type of conversation rather than them sort of putting the handbrake on immediately because they haven't thought it through enough.

I'm open to any ideas of anyone who has used someone good to train up their managers to lead...

I've got one I'll send you - they're just contact details for a woman ... that I've used to do some coaching of one of my program managers, which has had good results.

Did you use any particular matrix or analysis when you looked at that slice of donors?

Participants wanted to **understand their peer's approaches** and how they dealt with particular circumstances.

I'm really quite interested in understanding the thinking behind that

Where did the idea of that come from, may I ask?

Just really keen to understand whether or not it was a whole of board that are excited or slow carriages on the train - how you're managing those or letting them go?

Participants would often throw out **probing questions** to the group to encourage people to think through their ideas in more depth or offer suggestions of how to progress.

Have you identified any other organisation here in Australia or overseas that is kind of the model that you're aspiring to?

Would you have done anything differently if you had your time again [Participant Name]?

That [amount of money], was that above, below or at your expectation? How do you feel about it?

What if you did a bit of a needs analysis?

The only thing I wonder [Name] is if they'd go for like a peer to peer conversation - are there any people in any of our networks that could talk to your board?

The group was also a good source of **moral support and encouragement** for participants.

Good, that's empowering.

...very brave!

It's always in my head too... I always struggle with that.

I would say trust your gut ... don't doubt your own strategy and your own feelings about what's possible...

I'm hearing what you're saying...

...we're having similar discussions here.

5.4 Critical success factors

Critical success factors highlighted for a tour like this include:

- Getting away from the day-to-day business of running the organisation
- Informal, social time to debrief and get to know others
- Diversity of organisations whereby no one was in direct competition to others
- Commitment, openness and willingness of individuals to participate
- Group facilitation

Critical success factors refer to **both the study tour and subsequent group**, as the two are closely interrelated, with the trust built through the shared experience of the study tour strongly informing the collegial attitudes in the group, and strong positive group dynamics adding to the value of the study tour.

As mentioned, the **opportunity to get away from the day-to-day business of running an organisation** was crucial.

The removal of the group to another time zone was certainly a key part of the way we managed to focus on the purpose of the study tour and to give us a common sense of exploration and excitement (and jetlag!) to drive the collaboration.

Whether this needed to be overseas was not clear. Being in Australia on a retreat may not achieve the same sense of removal from the day-to-day, and may not have the same sense of shared adventure to discover new opportunities and approaches. Plus, being in the US offered an additional level of expertise in terms of content on the study tour, as the US is well known for experience in the fundraising domain. However, the culture of giving in America is so different that there are also some areas where the content wouldn't translate well to an Australian context.

Being out of the country does enable some distance to ensure day-to-day distractions are not interfering with collaborative learning.

Being away from Australia did allow you to focus purely on the learning experience and not get bogged down in the daily running of our own organisations. The learnings from an international experience was incredible as the lessons learnt and shared experiences of what works in the UK to the US was available for us to hear.

...it is hard to know if this [the overseas travel] was an essential ingredient in the benefits I experienced. I suspect it was.

Possibly a retreat in Australia would work but it was incredibly enriching to participate and recognise the difference in and sophistication in fundraising in another country / countries through a global conference. I would like to influence political taxation practices and giving practices and culture as a result of my involvement. This would probably not have happened had I stayed in a retreat in Australia.

An Australian retreat would not provide the extensive networking, as the community here is so much smaller.

I think other countries would work but the fundraising culture in the US was great to see and experience. I don't think a retreat in Australia would work as well as we would not be exposed to that difference in culture for fundraising which was so key to our learning.

A retreat would work having established the relationships initially. A study tour to a place of similar giving patterns and culture would be useful. America seems very different.

Most participants placed high value on **the informal, social time spent together, including food, partners and debriefing.**

Spending so much time together, the debrief at the end of the days on the study tour and I think the group itself.

Spending informal time together as well as candidly sharing battle stories and organisational challenges!

This was my favourite part of the study tour, especially the debrief at the end of the day when we shared what we learned. It was an incredible conference to see and be part of and really let me understand how different fundraising is in the US.

Additionally, **the diversity of organisations** seemed to contribute towards **trust** building, with **no one in direct competition** to others.

Coming from different sectors in the NFP world also helped considerably.

The diversity in the group fostered a team. The organisations represented didn't conflict, they were of different sizes and maturities.

I'm always happy to share what we're doing. I think you've put together a group where - I don't think there's anyone who would be a direct competitor for us in terms of fundraising.

I think the fact that we aren't competing, like we're not really competing in the same market has made it a really safe environment for all of us to be able to share things.

The **commitment, openness and willingness of individuals to participate in a group learning** experience, also contributed to the positive outcomes

Open conversation in a genuinely collaborative environment.

Commitment from the group, regular teleconferences and informal get togethers as we travel to each other's cities.

I am a very engaged by new approaches and information, I enjoy learning from my peers, and am naturally drawn to opportunities to collaborate.

I love knowledge acquisition and I am always keen to learn new things.

Individual personalities also contributed to the successful functioning of the group. On a personality scale, the group on average scored high on agreeableness and openness. Conscientiousness was also not surprisingly quite high on average.³

Participants highlighted **group facilitation** as an important factor in creating what was viewed as a safe, collaborative learning environment.

The environment was a great place to begin to build the trust. Everyone was willing to openly share their journeys some personally and as organisations. I think it was respectful and [the facilitator] created a safe place to share experiences and she was also able to impart her knowledge along the way. ...All in all I think it was great learning environment.

Similarly, having someone from the **funding body** as a member of the group brings a different perspective, unique knowledge base and different networks.

Cat, do you know anyone who has a really good, like policies around this sort of area?

Would you consider funding that type of role in organisations?

³ The five-factor model of personality has been developed from a number of theoretical perspectives (e.g. Allport & Odbert, 1936; Block, 1961; Goldberg, 1981; McCrae, Costa & Busch, 1986, Norman, 1963). Each of the five dimensions incorporates a number of traits. *Openness to Experience* encompasses curiosity, need for variety and imaginativeness. *Conscientiousness* includes organisation, need for achievement and persistence. *Extraversion* incorporates sociability, dominance and the tendency to experience positive emotions. *Agreeableness* includes sympathy, trust and cooperation. Finally *Neuroticism* examines the predisposition to experience negative affect (e.g. anxiety, anger, depression) as well as other manifestations of emotional instability (McCrae & Costa, 1989).

What's the appetite for funders? Cat, on your side for helping organisations like [organisation] to take themselves to the next stage?

5.5 Short term outcomes

5.5.1 2014 progress against goals

All organisations reported **progress against goals but these was not necessarily a linear process** with some steps forward, some steps backward and a few steps sideways. And of course **some organisations progressed at a faster speed than others**, in part because of the **nature and scope of the goals and organisation** and in particular **willingness of the board to engage** with the process.

A fundraising plan has been developed and while implementation is slow it will follow the new brand story and case for giving.

I completed an audit of operational matters and implemented a changed structure to meet strategies, implemented board ownership action plan, confirmed and amended fundraising strategy.

[We] increased reporting to Board on fundraising activities.

In terms of fundraising it has happened much slower than I intended.

I'm just reflecting on the mountain analogy and thinking I feel like I climbed one peak and then got to the top of that and discovered there was another one... it has just proved trickier than I might have anticipated getting the right people in the right spots.

5.5.2 Change Management

Participants highlighted becoming a fundraising organisation or **improving fundraising is essentially a change management process**.

Ultimately, improving fundraising in the organisation came down to the leadership of the board and having staff aligned with the strategic vision of the organisation.

Communications, marketing and rebranding activities were highlighted as important areas to improve due to their overlap with fundraising.

Given the ultimate governance and leadership role of the **board**, they were identified as **critical** to the change management process.

We have a Board who were pretty much all recruited for their governance skills not because they necessarily were donors or had a passion for the cause... we're looking at recruiting over the course of this year and giving us a really good chance ... to try and engineer some cultural change around those sort of things at the board level. ... I now want a board that are going to be more actively engaged with the higher net worth fundraising side of things, making introductions and networking on our behalf.

One of the highs has been that I had a very positive conversation with the chairman of the board about the ongoing role of the directors and he is certainly happy for us to start a conversation around their involvement and what that might look like, and what a transition plan for a board that's more engaged in fundraising - what that transition plan might look like. So that was good and extremely positive.

There have been a number of operational things that we've put in place, and I'm finding that internally the team are really quite engaged and excited to be thinking about a whole range of different opportunities, but I presented it to the board as part of a larger strategy and I had a huge amount of push back because the board are really not seeing us as fundraisers.... So there's a fair bit of work to get them to think differently ... the way we've done it before isn't going to sustain us in the future.

I am struggling a bit at a board level for them to think differently and perhaps it's just that they're always three months behind... it might just be that I need to allow a lot more time, and frame things differently, for them to be comfortable with what they might perceive as risky or innovative.

Some of it though is still a strategic shift in thinking, which has been quite profound for the board. The proof of the cake will be in what they do with it all from about mid-next year onwards when all of the change is in place.

As well as the board, it proved **crucial to have staff aligned with the strategic vision** of the organisation, and for some this meant **recruiting specialised fundraising staff**, to help implement the new strategies. However, many organisations found it **difficult to recruit the right staff** for this.

In addition to managing the board, HR proved to be a significant area to address for goals to move forward.

I've got a good team in place and things are ticking along pretty well but we still have some fairly reasonable challenges.

Some of the challenges for us was around capacity and we were already in the process of recruiting a couple of key people.

We've been doing a little bit of restructuring in the fundraising area with some change in staff. So I've amalgamated a couple of roles and created a head of fundraising. ... So we're getting our ducks lined up rather than moving forward too quickly at this point. .. I imagine it will be in the new financial year where I'll start to get a sense that we're getting some traction.

We're still - and have been all year - searching for a major donor manager, and we're really struggling.

We're in the final stages of recruiting a new communications manager which I think will be a really big step forward for us to increase our capacity to our comms more effectively, and we're thinking about what other support we need in our fundraising area so we can continue to work on our ideas around mid-level and major donors.

The biggest issue - the thing that I need more than anything else is people. The board seem more inclined to spend money buying direct mail lists...

The biggest issue - the thing that I need more than anything else is people. The board seem more inclined to spend money buying direct mail lists or doing telephone or even to face-to-face than they do actually wanting to hire people in my team.

It makes such a big difference when you get your team in place and it took me a while. I've almost clocked up two years ... So all of that change management within the organisation... it's nice to be almost out the other side and have – almost the A team in place and be able to go on holidays and not worry about things.

Not surprisingly, **communications, marketing and rebranding activities** were a significant focus area for many participants' organisations, due to the degree of overlap with fundraising – in terms of telling the organisation's story.

Previously I had the mindset of 'do the work and people will follow'. This isn't the case. We need to tell our story and then keep telling our story. ...We have created fundraising campaigns on our website. We need to do more work in this area. We are exploring the idea of creating a membership ...

Then underpinning most of what we're doing is a new exercise in branding and awareness. That's actually proving a bit of a challenge because everybody views themselves as being a marketer, and everybody views themselves as having a good idea of what we should be saying.

We did have some people come in and do some communications audit ...They pointed out that there was not one document - either printed or online - that actually used our organisational name in full....We rather smugly call ourselves [acronym] and then wonder why people go “well what do you do”?

That’s taken a bit of serious stakeholder management with committees that have been around for a long time, but we’re moving our focus around events to really look at peer to peer activities and how we can engage those social networks to be able to get behind the cause, and that of course relates to our brand repositioning work as well.

5.5.3 Organisational Culture

Changes to personnel and board members and the growth in the importance of fundraising had significant implications for the internal culture of some organisations; however such cultural changes were not seen in the short term.

Several challenges occurred in implementing these changes including internal resistance, which ultimately led to some staff and board members leaving the organisation.

Such changes have **significant implications for the internal culture** of the organisations.

Following the study tour I was able to encourage all the staff to come on the journey. We only have a small team in fundraising but the entire staff have become involved. We have had staff actively researching new ways of campaigning.

There is a culture shift in the organisation, with experiments and new positions and resources being given to see what approach is possible and useful to us.

The DNA of an organisation is very strong and if you’re successful in one area it’s harder to build a new area, and I think that’s partly what we’ve been experiencing. We’ve been pretty successful as a grants based organisation... but the individual donor stuff just requires some shift in thinking and practice I think that has been a little bit harder to get traction on than I had anticipated.

Changing the fixed mindset in junior staff who only know one way to fund raise-their way!! By using [specific tools] from other professionals I was able to push the barrow of change.

Some of it though is still a strategic shift in thinking, which has been quite profound for the board.

The biggest challenge for me has been dragging my team along... I try to empower them to go and think big. What do they want to do and how do we get [the organisation] somewhere? How do we double or triple our income in the next five years. A couple of people have done it really well and one or two of them have just fallen in a heap unable to even get there.

They were quite enthusiastic about doing it. I didn't have that pushback at all.

It's a journey for them but they have supported all my new initiatives.

Internal **cultural changes were not necessarily immediate, but many reported shifts in the medium term** after the study tour.

I did do a presentation to the board and really talked about, I guess, where we were ... in terms of fundraising and that we really needed to have a re-think, and talked about some of the concepts that I learnt about in the US. I think they all went a bit white at that stage!

[The board] had the June presentation with feedback from the San Antonio trip and whilst they didn't really take that on board in June perhaps it filtered in and they thought more about it between June and September, ... there's a much different appetite and an endorsement to actually to invest to achieve the change which we didn't have before.

Changing board culture has been slow and group discussion has provided me with more ideas to better manage this.

I know last time we hooked up I was possibly was in the depths of despair with my board but I have since had probably one of the best board meetings in my ... years with [organisation], and so at the last board meeting presented yet again my strategy and tried to address some of the concerns that they'd had at the previous board meeting and had a really amazing level of engagement and positive support.

There were also a number of **challenges, post study tour with implementing new ideas** and achieving goals, including some internal resistance.

I've sent some of my ideas and thoughts through to various team members at [the organisation] via email, and some of them already, a few people said, nice idea but why? So already even though I haven't met with my team face-to-face, there's a bit of push back about why change and why do some of the thoughts, so on

I'm sure that's only going to be a taste of what perhaps the board might also, how they might respond. So I'm having to collect my thoughts up and really think through a business

case. Just because I went away and have ideas doesn't mean that they are going to be applied without any questions and a solid business case.

...what we do costs money, it costs something, and it's kind of really taking a stand against that attitude of well we should just be doing everything for free. It's a hard one to combat even within your own organisation...

I have been very cautious here about enthusing too much since I came back. Partly because the board have to figure out what we stop doing in order to do new things.

It's about us I guess not apologising for the fact that what we do costs money, it costs something, and it's kind of really taking a stand against that attitude of well we should just be doing everything for free. It's a hard one to combat even within your own organisation it's hard sometimes.

For some organisations, this meant **letting go of some board members and staff who were not supportive of the new vision** or approach.

Those that bought into the new vision are here and right behind it and some people have left. There's only a few now that probably aren't 100% there.

Two board members decided not to go on the journey with me, which is fine, so we're setting them free.

...there was one who was incredibly resistant and incredibly rude... And a couple resigned because I felt that - I really felt that they thought that they weren't aligned with the new direction.

5.6 Face-to-face reflection workshop to discuss interim progress

Some 15 months after the initial study tour, participants were very keen to meet face-to-face again for a weekend reflection workshop to update and check-in with one another on their personal and organisational progress, discuss their experiences and reflect on the broader implications of these for the sector. Nearly all participants were able to join in this activity.

15 months on, some of the key reflections and changes in the organisations were:

- Organisational change is a long and, at times, difficult path
- Successful change requires commitment, prioritisation and getting the basics right first
- Expectations need to be carefully managed for organisations undergoing change – change is a perpetual process
- The importance of internal communication for shared understanding
- The unique and crucial role the group has played in providing support, ideas, validation and a renewed energy
- Organisations must not only create new opportunities but leverage the existing opportunities for giving
- The role bequests can play in growing the fundraising pie
- Being innovative and engaging donors requires risk and experimentation
- The importance of telling their story – this may require reconceptualising and rebranding
- The need for a shift towards greater emphasis on outcomes

5.6.1 Organisational Change

When reflecting back on their original goals, **many participants either could not remember them or had made mixed progress towards them**, leading to the realisation that **organisational change can be a long, fluid, distracted and at times difficult path**.

So my three goals went out the window ...So for a lot of reasons...

I do feel like it's been a really hard 12 months. Very hard.

I've said yes to too many things. That's my challenge at the moment.

Part of the reason it took a long time was because we had a whole lot of other stuff going on.

Critically, it was observed that **successful change processes require commitment, both in terms of time and an investment in resources.**

We actually took money out of reserves to do that. It wasn't something that we had floating around. That' yeah we will commit to this [fundraising investment] because we've got to do it'.

Participants reflected that often, starting new initiatives may require putting other activities on hold or ceasing them altogether. This requires a process of **prioritisation and making difficult decisions**. Some participants highlighted the importance of **getting the basics right first**, in order for new initiatives to be successful.

So we've prioritised that fundraising component, but probably what I haven't done is prioritised all of the elements around the systems to underpin it. I'm trying to do all of it.

...fundraising doesn't happen if you don't have strong leadership, good governance, good systems, good strategy, good programs and I would never have grown the organisation without that in place.

...we're just focusing on the basics.

Focus was needed on the quality of the **mission delivery, board and other factors as the prelude to strengthening fundraising** outcomes.

...for me it's not so much about fundraising, I think the success of your organisation in fundraising, whilst it is about fundraising, the success of your organisation in fundraising is a lot to do with the health of the organisation and how you're leading it and a whole lot of other factors, not just your fundraising strategy.

Nonetheless, despite a few false starts, and still a long way to go, after 15 months many participants felt they were **starting to get traction** when they reconsidered their original goals.

...we had not a couple of false starts, but just a little bit of a bumbling along with both engagement and with skill and it's hard to find good major gift people in Australia who are Australian.

The second goal was actually to work on bequests, which besides having it ticked off as something I can invest in from the board's perspective I haven't actually actioned. Hearing some of the discussion today is really useful in terms of thinking about how to address it.

It's a long way from where we were, so that's exciting, so we've ticked things off, but we haven't actually done a lot of fundraising new initiatives, I guess, at the [organisation] but they're the future steps.

...we're starting to get a lot more traction now.

The first year it was in there I had a huge push back from the board, and yet now it's just - they're seeing the benefit of the storytelling and the comms that we're dispersing.

I feel like we're at the top of the hill now and we can start to fly.

Importantly, this suggests that **expectations may need to be carefully managed for organisations wishing to undergo change** in fundraising profile. As the saying goes, it won't happen overnight. Furthermore, it requires a certain level of **energy and resilience to maintain the momentum** over such a duration, which is not always easy, as one participant highlighted, especially when other external factors come in to play. After all, it is not as though organisations can insulate themselves whilst they undergo a change process.

It's about maintaining the energy because the team would get tired and just look at me. So I've said to them, this is it, we're not doing any more change, this is a year of consolidating, implementing, putting it in place. So I think I had keep that level of energy through that period, so I am actually quite tired, to be honest.

I'm feeling really excited now. I get energy from seeing that happen and seeing the change. I don't think the staff are quite there, not all of them. My close team aren't.

...partly it's to do with being kind of ruthlessly - having a ruthless look at how to create enough oxygen in ...a particular part for that to be able to survive.

It's just whether you've got the resilience strategies that maybe others could learn from.

Internal communications for shared understanding so that everyone is on the same page was also identified as important to the change process.

...because we were disengaging from some of our programs, we would be making staff redundant, we would restructure, we would change our revenue streams and there was a lot of very careful planning so that we didn't send messages to staff that would alarm them.

...that has given us for the very first time really clear targets... so that everyone has a shared understanding of what the end game looks like ... we've really cut back; consolidated some and stopped others.

I've done a lot of restructuring within that team, really building a much clearer culture around setting KPIs and actually achieving them, and perhaps even over-achieving them.

We're going to focus our resources, get them done and dusted, and then we'll move on to the next one and then the next one. The people who are 12 down the list, they're more satisfied knowing that that's in place and that we'll get to them in six months' time or something like that, as opposed to this sort of frustration about when is it going to happen, and why can't I - and feeling not empowered to get their ideas over the line.

...people often describe a CEO role as a very lonely position...

Over the course of the project, participants reported how crucial the group's support was and is, for new ideas, renewed energy and validation.

...people often describe a CEO role as a very lonely position because there isn't anyone else you can talk to.

From a personal level, I just find this group of people fantastic and it's safe and we have some problems and yes it's lonely as a CEO, so apart from having a board or a coach, it's really nice to actually sit down with others who are in much the same situation and be able to share.

To really unpack some of the issues that we're dealing with... [it's] the meaty stuff that we're all benefiting so much from.

I've spoken to this group more ... about my thinking than I have to anyone else ...

I've got a list of 15 or 16 things that I'm going to go back and do and they've all come from something someone said and how I can transpose that into my organisation. So everyone, I have got a point from everyone in here. So I think that's exciting.

For me, the six weekly phone hook ups were pretty critical... I actually really, really needed it to check in and hear others say it's okay if it's not going to plan. ... I

actually credit those six weekly hook-ups with a personal sort of peer support network, which I wasn't getting anywhere else.

There's something unique about what each of us do that all the rest of us are gaining a lot of value.

I see everyone in this group as a mentor to me in some way, shape or form.

It's very humble and kind of diligent and inspiring. Over there [USA] as well last year.

Another key reflection by participants is that **change is a perpetual process**. As one goal is achieved, it is replaced by another. Arguably more than other types of organisations, nonprofits operate in a dynamic and ever changing environment, which means they need to continue to evolve. This suggests that change is not an isolated project but an ongoing process to be managed.

It's a marathon, not a sprint.

It's not just like you get a good guy and you're going to get the money start pouring in the door.

You can't implement things overnight either, can you?

It takes a while to transition.

To survive and stay relevant participants felt that organisations must **not only create new opportunities, they need to maximise or leverage the existing opportunities**; which some participants did with varying degrees of success. Lost opportunities were an issue.

...there are great opportunities. We don't exploit them.

The other thing that's interesting a lot of our major benefactors is the opportunity to leverage. So we have one who has put in [a large amount of money] over the last 10 years, but that's been able to leverage institutional philanthropic and competitive funding to like four-and-a-half to one,... [so it has] helped to leverage [more money].

...we have enough opportunities - we have more opportunities than resources to chase them down at the moment...

Whilst many organisations' goals included **diversification of fundraising streams**, for many, success went beyond questioning how the parts make up the whole to **strategic efforts to grow the overall giving possibilities**, particularly through bequests.

The goal though is to grow the pie.

But I think that whatever any of us are doing to promote giving through your will, leaving a gift in your will, is going to grow the pie, and I think that's where the biggest potential for bequests is, growing the pie ...

For many participants, this came down to **being innovative and engaging donors, particularly major donors**. This requires **risk and experimentation** – doing this differently, finding what works.

...the December board meetings were really positive around the board really backing the organisation and staff to invest in doing something differently.

It's about attaching yourself to really innovative projects in the field.

Yeah, it's hard to raise major gifts, like get major donors excited about business as usual. Because they want to do something that's transformational and different, it's going to really make a difference.

Innovation isn't necessarily 'I want the new thing that's never been done before'...Innovation is actually finding something that works, and taking it to scale, because that would be really innovative.

However, doing good work is not enough; people need to know about it. The way that impact was communicated by organisations was highlighted as a significant factor here. Indeed, many organisations **invested heavily in learning how to tell their story**. This includes reconceptualising and rebranding.

... the organisation was at a real crossroads of being able to survive... we didn't understand our social purpose really very well and our brand was dying.

[The organisation] had quite culture of complexity... we were very wordy in how we talked about what we did and it was very intellectual and there wasn't much, you know, touch the heart. So I've been trying to pare it back, pare it back, pare it back. ...you just needed to have someone come in and completely cut through it all.

We've had a much bigger focus on storytelling and communications marketing.

...we're about to launch our new brand. We spent a long time developing that brand and really understanding who we are and what we want to be and what our pillars below that are as well; so that's about to be launched... it'll be interesting as it becomes more formalised as to how does it resonate and do people actually understand who we are and what we do.

We will often have [beneficiaries] at our events... we will talk about the difference [The organisation] has made

...if you don't have the compelling story to sell, then you're just throwing good money after bad. You've got to have a pitch that is ambitious...

So there's a much better emotional connection...if it's one thing we've focused on, I think, the last 12, 15 months or so, it's really been trying to improve our storytelling at every level of what we're doing. It's all about the [beneficiaries] and what we're doing to make their life better and most of the time them telling the story...I'm constantly amazed at the willingness of [beneficiaries] who want to share their stories to help make a difference so that other families don't need to go through what they've gone through... We're doing a little bit more work on that, on the storytelling side of things

...so we've been a bit clearer about our barbecue pitch or elevator pitch, I suppose, about where the money goes and we're just going through the final throes of the development of a new four-year strategy, which will kick us off from the next financial year.

Because we've always been a little bit kind of self-effacing and hiding our light under a bushel. We're a big organisation getting great results across the country making a difference ... we should be really proud of that.

So it was getting a broader understanding of that and what kind of messaging is going to powerfully cut through to ensure that people do ... get what we do, why we do it and how effective we are in achieving it.

What we do is quite complex and people didn't really understand...So being able to go through a process of unpacking that and working out how to really get clarity was powerful....So we got a much tighter messaging.

This is about in one sentence how do I get someone's attention about what we do .

For many participating organisations, this represented a **critical shift towards greater emphasis on outcomes.**

We've become so outcomes focused.

At the last board meeting we've agreed to, on an annual basis, have a deep dive on impact and evaluation on our work, which is really good to get that higher profile.

...in our planning session we wrote up, these are the outcome measures we want, so how are we going to measure them? What KPIs are we going to measure to make that - to be able to show that we're making a difference?

5.6.2 Cultural Change

The participants also provided insights into the culture of giving in Australia and the consequences this has on fundraising:

- Australians remain reluctant to both give and ask for money. Many generous gifts are therefore hidden rather than celebrated.
- Many donors prefer to fund one-off or single-year projects which is problematic for organisations as is the preference to fund projects rather than salaries or operational expenses.
- There is a general perception that nonprofit organisations should provide services for free.
- It is vital to invest in training fundraising staff and explore a variety of revenue raising streams and commercialisation options.
- Changes to Australian taxation may be beneficial and stimulating giving, particularly bequests.

Aside from change at an organisational level, **participants developed a greater understanding of the nonprofit sector in Australia and where fundraising sits** through their discussions.

[I am]...understanding in a deeper way about where fundraising is in Australia and how it's actually probably getting harder in lots of respects.

The **culture of philanthropy in Australia has a significant impact on organisational funding and sustainability**. Participants highlighted that in their experience, despite increased wealth at the top end, **Australians remain reluctant to both give and ask for money**. This has **significant implications for fundraising organisations**.

...the primary problem was an embarrassment to ask and then the second problem is that there's a reluctance to give at the top end.

As a consequence, **many generous gifts are hidden rather than celebrated**, representing participants felt an opportunity for macro-level change, as greater awareness and celebration of giving can encourage others to follow suit, and indeed leverage the existing philanthropic dollars available in Australia.

A lot of the gifts in ours are often given in secrecy.

...I think the more you talk about it, the more people are public with what they're doing, the better it's going to be.

I think the benefit is perhaps not direct, it's indirect, and so that where it's seen as a good thing to be celebrating these partnerships, then it encourages other organisations who might not be in that space, to actually step into the space. So it increases the size of the pool.

He was also saying in Australia we have a tendency if there's a big major gift given and then others will withdraw their support because they think they don't need it anymore and the primary perpetrator of that is government. He said, we've got to be able to train government to think it's a value add and a leveraging of their dollars, not that someone's come in to fund it and they can put their dollars elsewhere.

The preference of many donors to fund **one-off or single year programs** was also highlighted as **problematic for continuity** within organisations.

So people who are doing this one year funding, you can't do anything and don't achieve anything with the relationships. So for us it's kind of three years...

...if you actually want to fully form the partnership around all of those elements like volunteering, and specialist volunteering, embedding yourself in the business and in our work, then you can't do that in a year.

...it's really difficult to deliver programs in an impactful way while government funding is on a year-to-year basis... that's probably a real barrier to achieving genuine outcomes for communities and issues that they're really passionate about.

Likewise, the preferences of many donors to **fund projects rather than salaries or operational expenses** was identified as problematic as it **negates the real cost of such projects**.

For me it's about influencing funders so that funders are actually investing in fundraising capacity.

I think a lot of it needs to come down to talking a different talk around investment in organisations, and the value in investment in organisations for outcomes as opposed to the project by project approach that's stinging not just your organisation, by the sounds of it, but the not-for-profit sector in general. We end up with funders that quite literally are the tail wagging the dog. You need to package something up for me and it needs to look like this. The integrity of the organisation is put at risk when that happens, unless you're a really strong organisation, really clear on what you exist to do. A lot of small to medium sized not-for-profits just don't have that luxury.

Participants felt that there was a general **perception in Australia that the nonprofit sector should provide services for free and ideally be operated by volunteers**, so that all of the resources are funnelled into the community or cause area; although this wasn't necessarily the case for all participating organisations.

I think there's a segment of an Australian sort of thinking around the charity should be staffed by people who are all volunteers, that shouldn't be paid anything.

One of our biggest donors... has more or less said... I'm happy to work with [this fundraiser] because I know he's going to deliver for me, he's going to leverage my funding... So he knows this guy is well paid to do what he's doing, but he knows he's going to deliver the job for him. So I think it comes back to that whole ... story, if you want a good outcome, you need to invest appropriate and it's not about the cost, it's about the value. So that's probably not sort of widespread, that sort of thinking.

Accordingly, participants felt it was **vital to invest more in training fundraising staff, especially major gift fundraisers**, as many had found it extremely difficult to recruit for such positions from within the Australian workforce as mentioned earlier.

I think it's a major gift workforce that we're really lacking here. But if we can grow the major gift workforce, they will be able to mentor people in smaller organisations and support them. Workforce is just such an issue.

So I think we're still on that journey. The US are a long way down that path around its profession and they expect it to be done well by people who are well trained, well paid and capable.

Everyone's looking overseas for particularly major gift people, so how do we create the growth in the Australian sector of people actually coming to Australia to access amazing fundraisers or leaders who are more engaged with the resourcing side of the not-for-profit sector, so again, taking that bigger beyond fundraising.

Furthermore, many organisations were exploring **a variety of revenue-raising streams and commercialisation options**.

Talking about cultural change within the sector, one of the things that's come up that's a theme over the last couple of days has been this need, I think, for the sector to move away from the traditional fundraising models and philanthropy and commercialisation and the difficulty the sector has in commercialising anything that we do because not-for-profit means it should be free; you're there for your stakeholders, you're there not to make money, you're there to deliver

good. I think for a sustainable sector, that's going to have to change into the future because unless we can change the culture of giving, which is important as well, there has to be a change in culture of expectation around the not-for-profit sector that goes to legislation around how we are able to commercialise our products, it goes to willingness to pay.

...that's why it's got to be a cultural change. This expectation that what is provided by not-for-profit sector should be for free, freely available and funded through government or fundraising I don't think is a sustainable way for us to operate into the future.

...commercialisation is a really big thing that we're starting to look at.

We've got to move away from not-for-profits do things for free all the time and got to start to look at the ways that we can create sustainable financial models for fantastic things that we put out into the community.

Additionally, participants highlighted that **changes to Australian taxation could be beneficial for stimulating charitable giving, particularly bequests, which were seen as a hugely valuable donation source.**

We were talking yesterday about the culture around major gifts, we don't really have the culture around gifts in wills either.

That's what makes a big difference in the US, and they're still bequesting in the US, because a lot of living wills, because of the tax treatment.

...death duty puts money into the hand of government, but it also creates incentives to give, because I don't want to give it to government.

I find that they're the most enjoyable donor group that I get to work with, are people who are confirmed bequestors, because they're the ones that have made that decision to leave part or all of their life to your charity. Those decisions don't come lightly, and you can't hard sell it, and they're genuinely wanting to make a difference. So I think they're wonderful people... I probably won't see the benefit of the work that we're doing in the time that I'm there, but hopefully we can set the foundation for it to do something more substantial in the long run.


Participants went on to generate ideas about **how they can leverage the group going forward to influence the broader social change agenda.**

...the idea of taking a sort of connected leadership group to achieve impact at a different scale, whether or not we look at an issue that we can exert influence and achieve change at a scale that is beyond and greater than the sum of the parts of the 12 or whatever number of organisations, I think is something to really aspire to and something we should seriously consider.

...we've got a cadre of leadership, all of them who have committed their lives...we're really talking about how do you resource long term international change as a small group through fellowship...

... the group has developed in a way that people are interested in the way each other think and we all think differently... So if we can hold on tightly to that, I think that can be quite valuable.

Imagine in 20 years we were sitting around together still having conversations about what we'd achieved and all the way along we would have been helping each other on those journeys.



*Imagine in 20 years
we were sitting
around together still
having
conversations...*

6.0 A QUICK SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE

The concept of a CEO study tour involves several areas of the academic literature.

To begin with, the tour was primarily around the concept of learning. Knowles (1977) identified five basic assumptions of adult learning:

1. Adults are more self-directed.
2. Experiences provide a rich resource for learning.
3. Adults have a great readiness to learn which develops from life tasks and problems.
4. Adults are task/problem centred in their learning.
5. Adults are internally motivated.

This second assumption around experience was particularly important in this study. 'Knowledge is created through the transformation of experience' (Kolb, 1984) and learning is a multidimensional process, which is strengthened by emotive, sensory and kinaesthetic experiences. Furthermore, we process new information with a reference to prior experiences (Connolly, 2008; Merriam, 2008). According to Kolb's experiential learning theory there are four dialectically opposite modes of adaptation to the world – concrete vs abstract; reflective vs. active. Together, these form the four stages of the experiential learning cycle (see Figure 1).

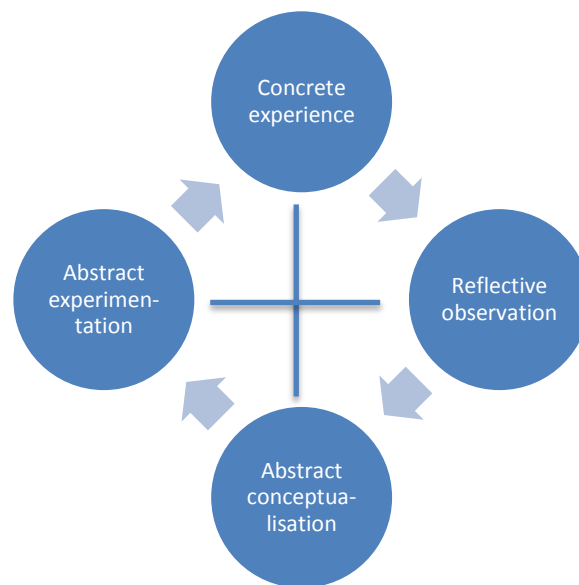


Figure 2. Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory

Along with individual learning, this study tour also involved group learning. The literature identifies both collaborative and transformative group learning. The collaborative approach suggests the group strives to construct knowledge through shared inquiry rather than to discover 'objective truths' (Cranton, 1996, p. 27). Transformative group learning or participatory learning sees individuals take control of their own learning. There are no restrictions in this process and learners can look at new perspectives and challenge commonly held beliefs. Critical self-reflection is promoted through learner decision making and equal participation. It is important to allow individuals to explore and question their own perspectives and assumptions. In this way it is crucial

that the educator does not impose their own perspectives and remains trustworthy and supportive of the process and the learners, maintaining influence due to expertise, experience or loyalty. The individuals must also be supportive of each other. Networks both within and outside the group can help establish this trust (Cranton, 1996).

One specific type of group which a study tour represents is a *community of practice* (COP). COPs are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something, and by interacting with each other regularly, they learn how to improve (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015; Wenger, 2001). They are social learning systems and are alternately called learning networks or thematic groups (Snyder & de Souza Briggs, 2003; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). They can be formal or informal; may be large or small; local or global; within an organisation or include members from various organisations. There are, however three characteristics crucial for a group to be called a community of practice.

1. The domain. There is a shared domain of interest and a commitment to that domain (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015).
2. The community. There needs to be interaction between members of the group. They need to learn together or discuss ideas, with trust, openness, and a sense of belonging, a shared commitment and common values. The voluntary nature of the COP is important to fostering the aspects of the community (Snyder & de Souza Briggs, 2003).
3. The practice. A community of practice differs from a community of interest in that every member of the community is a practitioner. The term not only refers to methodologies but also skills. A COP develops a bank of shared resources (e.g. experiences, tools, strategies). This shared practice can be explicit or implicit (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015).

COPs are developed through a variety of shared activities including problem solving, coordination, visits, mapping knowledge and identifying gaps, seeking experience and requesting information. A key feature of COPs is building, sharing and applying capabilities (Snyder & de Souza Briggs, 2003). Adaptation to a changing environment requires learning and innovation which is why COPs can be invaluable both for the individuals involved and their organisation (or organisations).

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